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What is claimed is:

- 5 1. Process for the preparation of 2,3,5-trimethyl-1,4-hydroquinone diacylates by reacting ketoisophorone with an acylating agent in the presence of methane trisulfonic acid.
2. A process as in claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of about 0.01 mol% to about 2 mol% of methane trisulfonic acid, based on ketoisophorone.
- 10 3. A process as in claim 2 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of about 0.1 mol% to about 1 mol% of methane trisulfonic acid, based on ketoisophorone.
4. A process as in any one of claims 1-3 wherein the molar ratio of acylating agent to  
15 ketoisophorone is about 10 to 1, preferably about 3 to 1.
5. A process as in any one of claims 1-4 wherein the acylating agent is acetic anhydride.
6. A process as in any one of claims 1-5 wherein the reaction is carried out at about 0 °C to  
20 about 140 °C, preferably at about 20 °C to about 70 °C.
7. A process as in any one of claims 1-6 wherein the 2,3,5-trimethyl-1,4-hydroquinone diester obtained is converted in a manner known per se to  $\alpha$ -tocopherol.

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